

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

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FM AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN
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INFO AMCONSUL DURBAN
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AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
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E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV, PINT, SF
SUBJ: LABOR PARTY BOYCOTTS CRC OPENING; FORMALLY REJECTS
CONSTITUTIONAL PROPOSALS

SUMMARY: STATE PRESIDENT DIEDERICHS OPENED 1977 SESSION
OF COLORED REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL (CRC) SEPT 9 WITH
MAJORITY LABOR PARTY BOYCOTTING TO PROTEST SAG'S
REFUSAL TO ALLOW ZULU LEADER CHIEF GATSHA BUTHELEZI TO
OPEN THE SESSION. IN MEETING OF ITS NATIONAL EXECUTIVE
COUNCIL SEPT 10, LABOR PARTY UNANIMOUSLY ADOPTED
RESOLUTION REJECTING SAG'S NEW CONSTITUTIONAL PROPOSALS.
END SUMMARY

1. THE "COLORED" LABOR PARTY BOYCOTTED THE OPENING OF
THE CRC BY STATE PRESIDENT DIEDERICKS ON SEPT 9 TO
PROTEST SAG'S REFUSAL TO ALLOW ZULU LEADER
CHIEF GATSHA BUTHELEZI TO ACCEPT LABOR
PARTY'S INVITATION TO PRESIDE AT THE OPENING. DURING
HIS OPENING SPEECH DIEDERICHIS APPEALED TO COLORED
LEADERS TO COOPERATE WITH SAG IN IMPLEMENTING NEW
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CONSTITUTIONAL PROPOSALS. HOWEVER, LABOR PARTY'S
60-MAN NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MET THE FOLLOWING
DAY AND UNANIMOUSLY ADOPTED RESOLUTION REJECTING THE
NEW PROPOSALS. THE FEDERAL PARTY, WHICH HOLDS 8 OF
THE 40 ELECTED SEATS IN THE CRC, ANNOUNCED THAT IT
WOULD SUPPORT THE NEW PROPOSALS.

2. DEPUTY LABOR PARTY LEADER DAVID CURRY AND NATIONAL CHAIRMAN REV. ALLAN HENDRICKSE TOLD CONGENOFF THAT CONTRARY TO "SPECULATION" IN AFRIKAANS NEWSPAPER "DIE BURGER", THERE HAD BEEN NO "SPLIT" IN THE NEC. HEDRICKSE SAID "OF COURSE" THERE HAD BEEN A NUMBER OF QUESTIONS AND LENGTHY DISCUSSION BUT THE VOTE ON THE RESOLUTION REJECTING THE NEW SCHEME HAD BEEN UNANIMOUS. AMONG REASONS CITED FOR REJECTION WERE: THE NEW SCHEME WOULD "ENTRENCH APARTHEID" IN THE CONSTITUTION, GIVE PRESIDENT "DICTATORIAL POWERS," SEEKS TO CREATE ALLIANCE OF WHITES, COLOREDS AND INDIANS AGAINST BLACKS, IS A STEP AWAY FROM WESTMINSTER SYSTEM OF DEMOCRACY AND WAS CREATED SOLELY BY SAG AND DENIES DEMOCRATIC RIGHT OF ALL PEOPLE IN SOUTH AFRICA TO HAVE A SAY IN DEVISING ANY NEW CONSTITUTION. RESOLUTION CONCLUDED BY CALLING FOR A NATIONAL CONVENTION REP OF ALL GROUPS TO DRAFT NEW CONSTITUTION. FULL TEXT OF RESOLUTION BEING POUCHED.

3. HENDRICKSE SAID LABOR PARTY WILL INTRODUCE RESOLUTION IN CRC IN NEXT DAY OR SO REJECTING NEW PROPOSALS. HE SAID FEDERAL PARTY WILL OPPOSE THE MOTION AS WILL MANY INDEPENDENTS WHO ARGUE THAT NEW PROPOSALS SHOULD BE ACCEPTED AS "BASIS FOR NEGOTIATION" WITH SAG. HOWEVER, AT LEAST 3 OR 4 INDEPENDENTS ARE EXPECTED TO JOIN 29 LABOR MEMBERS IN SUPPORT, THUS PROVIDING SUFFICIENT VOTES TO PASS IN THE 60-MAN CRC. HENDRICKSE

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SAID DEBATE IN CRC IS NEEDED TO EDUCATE INDEPENDENTS AND EVEN FEDERAL PARTY MEMBERS, MANY OF WHOM DO NOT FULLY UNDERSTAND THE NEW SCHEME.

4. COMMENT: WHILE LABOR PARTY NEC REJECTED PROPOSALS, IT DID NOT RPT NOT DEBATE WHAT COURSE LABOR SHOULD FOLLOW IF NEW CONSTITUTION BECOMES LAW AND NEW ELECTIONS ARE CALLED. HOWEVER, BOTH CURRY AND HENDRICKSE HAVE TOLD CONGENOFF PARTY "WILL HAVE NO CHOICE" BUT TO REPEAT ITS CURRENTLY OBSTRUCTIVE AND NONCOOPERATIVE STRATEGY TOWARD THE CRC, I.E., TO PARTICIPATE IN ELECTION AND THEN, HAVING OBTAINED A MAJORITY POSITION, REFUSE TO CARRY OUT THE FUNCTIONS OF THE INSTITUTION. SUCH ELECTIONS ARE UNLIKELY TO BE HELD BEFORE LATE 1978 OR EARLY 1979 AND IT IS SIMPLY TOO EARLY TO TELL NOW WHETHER LABOR PARTY WILL BE ABLE SUCCESSFULLY TO CONVINCE THE MAJORITY OF THE COLOREDS OF THE WISDOM OF SUCH STRATEGY UNDER WHAT ARE LIKELY TO BE VASTLY CHANGED CIRCUMSTANCES FROM THE LAST CRC ELECTIONS IN 1975. WHITE

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Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
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